

REMARKS

Claims 1, 2, 4-9, and 11 are pending in this application. Claims 3 and 10 have been canceled. Claim 11 has been newly added. Claims 1 and 5 are herein amended. Reconsideration of the rejections in view of these amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Restriction/Election

Restriction has been required because newly submitted claim 10 allegedly is independent or distinct from the invention originally claimed.

Claim 10 has been canceled.

Drawing Objection

The drawings have been objected to under 37 CFR 1.83(a), which provides that the drawings must show every feature of the invention specified in the claims.

The drawings and the specification have been amended to overcome the objection.

Rejections under 35 USC §103(a)

Claims 1, 2, 4, 5-8 and 9 are rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being obvious over Cantell et al (U.S. Patent No. 6,255,179) in view of Apte et al (U.S. Patent No. 5,593,924), the excerpt from Van Zant (*Microchip Fabrication*, 4th Ed., McGraw-Hill: New York, 2000, pp. 34, 172-173, 179-182).

Claims 1 and 5 have been amended to recite “oxidizing the wiring for at most 20 seconds, using a rapid thermal processing in an atmosphere including an oxygen gas and a hydrogen gas,

beginning on an upper surface thereof down to a predetermined depth.” Cantell et al, Apte et al and Van Zant do not teach or suggest, among other things, these particular recitations.

Especially, the Examiner alleged that the basic textbook of Van Zant teaches that rapid thermal processing is advantageous for reducing thermal budget (page 6, lines 9-10). The Examiner further alleged that Van Zant teaches that rapid thermal oxidation can be carried out using steam, and that steam is beneficially clear, and the oxidation process better controlled, by combusting hydrogen and oxygen (page 6, the last paragraph). The present invention as defined in amended claims 1 and 5, however, has the advantages over Van Zant described below.

The rapid thermal processing for at most 20 second prevents the secondary contamination of the wiring in the succeeding step of forming the metal silicide film (page 10, lines 7-15). Further, the rapid thermal processing exerts little influence on the impurity concentration distribution (page 7, lines 3-5). Such results cannot be expected from Van Zant.

For at least these reasons, claims 1 and 5 patentably distinguish over the cited references. Claims 2, 4 and 9, which depend from claim 1, and claims 6-8, depending from claim 5, also should patentably distinguish over the cited references for at least the same reasons.

If the Examiner believes that this application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned attorney at the telephone number indicated below to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this case.

Amendment under 37 C.F.R. §1.114
Serial No. 09/995,575

In the event that this paper is not timely filed, Applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. Please charge any fees for such an extension of time and any other fees that may be due with respect to this paper to Deposit Account No. 50-2866.

Respectfully Submitted,

WESTERMAN, HATTORI, DANIELS & ADRIAN, LLP

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sadao Kinashi".

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Attachment: Replacement Sheet
Annotated Sheet Showing Changes

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